

Ali Mardan Khan tomb

The Lahore's highest tomb called Ali Mardan Khan's tomb. A narrow lane (Pathway just like tunnel) leads to the tomb, from the Weatman Road, which is an offshoot of the Grand Trunk Road near the Shalimar Garden. Edifices octagonal in plan stand in the enclosure of the General Stores of Pakistan Railway. The entry is not allowed the local public.

Ali Mardan was originally a noble serving at the court of the Safavid king Shah Tahmasp. After surrender of Qandahar by Iranian to Emperor Shah Jahan in 1638, he joined the Mughals and rapidly rose to very high rank at the Mughal court. He became an indispensable member of the Mughal nobility and was appointed as Governor of Kashmir, Lahore and Kabul. In 1639, Ali Mardan Khan was given the title of Amir al-Umara (Lord of Lords), appointed as Haft Hazari (commander of 7,000 troops) and was appointed as he Viceroy of the Punjab, which stretched from Peshawar to Delhi.

Professionally Ali Mardan Khan was an eminent engineer. He supervised the construction of several royal buildings in Kashmir and digging of the Delhi canal, which runs between the Red Fort and the old city. The water supply system of Shalimar Gardens in Kashmir (Gulmarg) was also planned by him. His lasting contribution to actualize Shah Jahan's paradisiacal vision for Lahore was the construction of a canal from the river Ravi for the supply of water to the Shalimar Gardens, as well as for the irrigation and cultivation of surrounding areas. He died in 1657A.D. while travelling on his way to Kashmir. His body was carried back for burial in the magnificent tomb that he had been built for his mother. He was laid to rest along the side of graves of his mother and her maid servant.

The tomb once stood at the center of a paradisiacal garden; a favorite theme as evidenced in the sepulcher of Jahangir. The extent of Ali Mardan garden can be gauged by the double-story gateway in the north mentioned above. Similar gateways would have been erected in the south, west and east edges of the garden square.

The ravaged condition of the tomb is attributed to the Sikh rule, when the tomb structure was used as a store of military magazine by Gulab Singh, one of Ranjit Singh's generals. Its gateway was residence by Gurdit Singh, colonel of the Sikh battalion Misranwali.

In British period tomb suffered yet more damage and destruction. The edifice was encroached upon by the construction of railway workshops. However, in 1884 certain steps were taken for its preservation.

Bibliography

Lal, Kanhaya. *Tareekh e Lahore*. Lahore: Sang e Meel, 2015 (1886).

Locally. *Locally Lahore*. 2019. <https://locallylahore.com/blog/tag/mubarak-haveli/> (accessed 2019).

Rehmani, Anjum. *Lahore: History and Architecture of Mughal Monuments*. Karachi: Oxford, 2016.